

## **REMARKS**

In response to the Non-Final Office Action dated January 23, 2004, Applicant submits the following remarks.

Pursuant to the Outstanding Office Action, the Examiner has rejected Applicant's original claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the U.S. Patent to Grosse (No. 5,551,184), in view of the U.S. Patent to Selig (No. 1,556,966).

The reference to Grosse discloses several embodiments of a portable cushion for enveloping the butt end of a fishing rod. The reference to Selig discloses a protective tip for attachment to the end of a handle, such as a broom handle.

Applicant's claims 1-14, as originally filed, include independent claims 1 and 8. Applicant's original independent claims 1 and 8 specifically recite a one-piece integrally formed body comprising a base portion and a distinct neck portion extending from the base portion. Applicant's original independent claims 1 and 8 further recite a receptacle extending axially through the neck portion and surrounded by an inner wall surface extending from the open end of the neck portion to a bottom within the base portion. The applicant specifically claims the receptacle being integrally formed with the base portion to provide a shoulder for stopping continued passage of the butt end of the fishing rod through the receptacle. Applicant's independent claims 1 and 8 further recite elongate ribs on the inner wall surface and extending longitudinally from within the base portion and through the neck portion for

frictional engagement with the butt end of the fishing rod to releasably hold the one-piece integrally formed body on the butt end of the fishing rod.

The references to Grosse and Selig, considered alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest a one-piece integrally formed body with a shoulder at the bottom of the receptacle and longitudinal ribs extending from within the base portion and through the neck portion, as specifically recited in applicant's independent claims 1 and 8.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the references to Grosse and Selig fail to render applicant's invention obvious and, therefore, the rejection of applicant's claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been overcome.

Since nowhere in the art is applicant's invention, as claimed, to be found, taught or suggested, it is respectfully submitted that this Application is now in condition for allowance.

For all of the reasons advanced above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the allowability of Applicant's claims and to pass this case to early favorable allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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